

# Food and Nutrition Policy for EYFS



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## Policy Statement

At Green Ridge Primary Academy, we are committed to providing healthy, balanced, and nutritious meals, snacks, and drinks to all children in our care. This policy is based on the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework and follows the Department for Education's Nutrition Guidance for Early Years Providers (April 2025).

### Aims

- Ensure all food and drink provision supports children's health, growth, and development.
- Foster positive eating habits early in life.
- Meet individual children's dietary, cultural, medical, and ethical needs.
- Promote safe food handling and hygiene practices.
- Work closely with parents and carers regarding children's nutrition.

## Guiding Principles

We are committed to providing children with a healthy, balanced, and nutritious diet to support their growth, development, and long-term well-being. Our approach is rooted in evidence-based guidance and ensures consistency across our food provision.

### Healthy, Balanced, Nutritious Food

- All meals and snacks include foods from the four main food groups every day:
  - Fruit and vegetables – provided fresh, frozen, tinned in water or juice, or dried (only as part of meals).
  - Starchy carbohydrates – including bread, rice, pasta, and potatoes, with a focus on wholegrain options.
  - Dairy and fortified plant alternatives – unsweetened and plain varieties only.
  - Protein-rich foods – such as meat, fish, eggs, beans, pulses, and vegetarian or vegan alternatives.
- Foods high in sugar, salt, and saturated fats (e.g., cakes, crisps, confectionery) are avoided across all snacks and meals.
- Only fresh drinking water and plain milk are provided to children throughout the day. No juice or flavoured drinks are offered.

These principles underpin our daily practice and help children develop positive, lifelong eating habits.

## Food Brought from Home

We recognise that some families may choose to provide food for their children. To ensure alignment with our healthy eating ethos and maintain high standards of food safety, we ask all families to follow the guidance below:

### Healthy Eating Requirements

- Food brought from home must support the setting's healthy eating approach.
- Items such as sweets, chocolate, sugary drinks, and highly processed foods are not permitted.
- Balanced options including fruit, vegetables, whole grains, and proteins are encouraged.

### Food Safety and Storage

- Perishable foods must be packed in an insulated lunch bag with ice packs to maintain a safe temperature.
- The following are considered high-risk foods, which can spoil quickly or grow harmful bacteria if not kept cold:
  - Cooked rice and pasta
  - Cooked meats (e.g. chicken, ham)
  - Fish and seafood
  - Dairy products (e.g. milk, yoghurt, cheese)
  - Eggs
  - Sandwiches with moist fillings
  - Cut fruits and salads

- If these foods are not kept cool, they must be consumed within four hours of preparation (the '4-hour rule').
- The setting does not provide refrigeration for food brought from home and cannot reheat food for safety reasons.

#### Labelling and Allergen Information

- All food containers and lunchboxes must be clearly labelled with the child's full name.
- Parents and carers must inform the setting of any allergens present in food provided from home.

#### Developmentally Appropriate Preparation

- Food must be prepared to suit each child's stage of development.
- Items that may pose a choking risk, such as grapes or cherry tomatoes, must be cut appropriately.

### Food Safety and Hygiene

We are committed to maintaining the highest standards of food safety and hygiene to protect the health and wellbeing of all children.

- All staff strictly follow food hygiene procedures, including regular handwashing, correct food storage, safe preparation, and appropriate serving practices.
- Cross-contamination risks are minimised through the use of separate utensils, equipment, and preparation areas where required (e.g. for allergens or raw vs cooked foods).
- Foods that are prone to bacterial growth, such as cooked rice, dairy products, and eggs, are stored and handled in accordance with food safety guidelines.
- Staff monitor food temperatures, where appropriate, and regularly check for signs of spoilage.
- All food preparation staff hold a current Food Hygiene Certificate, with training refreshed regularly to remain compliant with best practice and regulation.
- Children are actively encouraged and supported to wash their hands before meals, after handling food, and following outdoor or messy play.

### Allergies, Intolerances, and Medical Diets

We are committed to providing a safe environment for all children, including those with food allergies, intolerances, or medical dietary requirements. Robust procedures are in place to ensure their health and wellbeing.

- Comprehensive dietary and allergy information is collected prior to admission and reviewed regularly in consultation with parents and carers.
- Allergy Action Plans are developed for all children with diagnosed allergies, detailing symptoms, treatment, and emergency procedures.
- Our allergen management includes:
  - Clear labelling of allergens on all food served.
  - Separate storage and preparation areas for allergen-free meals where necessary.
  - Staff trained to identify signs of allergic reactions and administer appropriate emergency care.
  - Strict procedures to prevent cross-contamination, including the use of dedicated utensils, equipment, and thorough cleaning protocols.
- Emergency medication, such as epinephrine (adrenaline) auto-injectors, is stored securely but accessibly, with all relevant staff trained in its safe administration.

These measures are regularly reviewed and reinforced through staff training and communication with families, ensuring that all dietary needs are respected and managed with care.

### Cultural and Dietary Preferences

We are committed to respecting and supporting the diverse cultural, religious, and ethical values of our children and their families.

- We provide for vegetarian and vegan dietary needs, ensuring that meals remain balanced and meet nutritional standards.
- Meal plans are adjusted to reflect cultural and personal dietary preferences, including religious requirements such as halal or kosher, where feasible.
- All adaptations are made in consultation with families to ensure individual needs are met sensitively and appropriately.

Our inclusive approach to food ensures that every child feels respected and supported during mealtimes.

### Celebrations and Special Occasions

We encourage healthy and inclusive celebrations in line with our commitment to children's well-being and safety. Examples include fruit platters or non-food items such as stickers, pencils, or small toys. To ensure we meet all dietary, allergy, and safeguarding requirements, any celebratory items must be distributed by parents or carers at the school gate and not within the school setting.

### Mealtime Environment and Social Aspects

We view mealtimes as valuable opportunities for social interaction, learning, and the development of healthy relationships with food.

- Meals are treated as social occasions, with children sitting together to promote conversation, good manners, and a sense of community.
- Staff actively support children to try new foods and engage in mealtime routines.
- Where developmentally appropriate, children are encouraged to self-serve, helping to foster independence, confidence, and decision-making skills.
- A calm and unhurried atmosphere is maintained to ensure mealtimes are enjoyable, respectful, and inclusive for all children.

### Learning About Food

We actively support children's understanding of healthy eating through a variety of engaging learning experiences:

- Storybooks and group discussions that explore the importance of nutritious food and balanced diets.
- Sensory activities encouraging children to explore different tastes, smells, and textures of a wide range of foods.
- Hands-on grow-your-own projects, such as planting, nurturing, and harvesting herbs or vegetables, to connect children with the origins of their food.

### Cooking With Children

We provide age-appropriate cooking activities designed to foster practical skills, food knowledge, and a positive attitude towards healthy eating.

- All cooking sessions are conducted under close supervision with strict adherence to hygiene and safety practices, including handwashing and surface cleaning.
- Recipes are chosen to be simple, nutritious, and engaging, encouraging children's enthusiasm for preparing and tasting healthy ingredients.
- These activities support children's independence, fine motor skills, and confidence in the kitchen.

### Monitoring and Review

- This policy will be reviewed **at least annually**, or sooner if there are changes in legislation, government guidance, or the specific needs of the setting.
- Feedback from **parents, carers, staff, and children** is actively sought and considered to inform ongoing improvements and ensure the policy remains effective and relevant.
- Any updates or amendments will be communicated clearly to all stakeholders.

Summary of Key Practical Guidance	
Area	Guidance
Food from Home	Healthy options only, labelled, with allergen info. High-risk foods must be kept cool or eaten within 4 hours.
Choking Prevention	Food prepared appropriately (e.g., cut grapes lengthways, small soft bites). Children supervised at all times when eating.
Storage and Transport	Use insulated bags and ice packs. No refrigeration or reheating is offered by the setting.
Special Diets	Allergy Action Plans in place; cross-contamination prevented. Dietary and medical needs accommodated
Hygiene	Food stored, prepared, and served following strict hygiene standards to protect children's health.